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A PAN-AMERICAN POLICY: THE MONROE DOCTRINE MODERNIZED¹

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I sometimes feel that all this discussion of the Monroe Doctrine is entirely in vain, that there is nobody who is an ultimate court upon the subject—nobody who can decide just what is its interpretation or its meaning or its significance. I know that I would not for a moment pretend that any views which I have upon the subject are final. I had at first decided I would not make any remarks, but I will briefly summarize some thoughts which I have been going over in my mind for many years in my association with Latin America. In my humble experience as minister in three American republics and during the seven years that I have had the honor of being the Director General of the Pan-American Union, I have striven earnestly to get what I call the Pan-American viewpoint of the Monroe Doctrine. Now I do not ask anyone to accept what I say as final, but perhaps I look at this subject from a viewpoint a little different from that of many persons, because I have the rather unique position and experience of being the only Pan-American officer in America—not only one who is an officer of the United States but who is in every respect equally an officer of the other Latin-American countries. Each day it is one of the duties of the members of my staff to lay before me the consensus of opinion of the newspapers of every important capital of the western hemisphere; and therefore while I am actually in this country, I am able to follow closely the views of the peoples of other lands upon this subject under discussion.

As one who has been intimately associated, officially and privately, for nearly fourteen years with Latin America and Latin Americans, I may be permitted to make a few humble suggestions, which, if followed, might affect the permanent status of the Monroe Doctrine among the American nations, and might not!

¹Remarks as presiding officer of the session of the Academy, Friday morning, April 3, 1914.

I believe the time is coming when there may be evolved from the Monroe Doctrine itself as a principle and phrase, and thereupon substituted for the Monroe Doctrine as a principle and phrase, the principle and phrase of a "Pan-American policy." (These ideas, to some extent, I developed last fall at a meeting in Washington of the Society for Judicial Settlement of International Questions. What I am saying here is really a sublimated form of what I said at that time.) By that I mean a Pan-American policy acceptable to and approved by not only the United States, but all the American republics, a policy belonging to each and all on the same basis of attitude and action, protecting alike the sovereignty and governments of each—which is, after all, the delicate point—without the offensive suggestion of preponderance, dictation or domination of one nation like the United States. It is a common error among some of the statesmen and essayists of the United States, whenever they speak or write anything about the southern republics, to patronize them. This is a fatal error—always thus reminding them of the power and mightiness of the United States, as if the United States were both "papa" and "mamma," and they a group of little children playing in the back yard. Coupled with this are the equally common errors: First, that of not recognizing the extraordinary greatness and progress of some of the republics, even if others are not so progressive; and secondly, of classing them all as having revolutionary tendencies, in spite of the fact that two-thirds of Latin America, in area and population, has known no serious revolution whatever in the last twenty-five years.

This Pan-American policy would adopt, absorb and enlarge the Monroe Doctrine as an original policy of the United States into a greater and all-American policy, where each nation would have the same rights of attitude, the same dignity of position and the same sense of independence as the United States now has. By eliminating the attitude of absolute dictation and centralized power, which the Monroe Doctrine has been interpreted in Latin America as applying to the relations of the nations of the western hemisphere, by the substitution of "Pan-American" for "Monroe"—thus including all the American nations as sponsors—and by the substitution of "policy" for "doctrine" and thus removing the hard, unyielding, dictatorial and didactic suggestion of the words "Monroe Doctrine," about which every Latin American is a little sensitive, a long step will be taken

towards a new era of Pan-American comity and Pan-American confidence.

It is not the Monroe Doctrine itself as a principle, but the *interpretation*—and mark my word—the *interpretation thereof*, as indicated in the recently published opinions of many prominent Latin Americans on this subject, that is not acceptable to the majority of Latin-American countries and statesmen. This is a point that has been clearly overlooked by the critics of the Monroe Doctrine in the United States. If its haphazard interpretation can be supplanted with responsible and reasonable judgment, the majority of arguments against the doctrine in Latin America, and also in the United States, in describing it as obsolete will fail absolutely in their purpose and logic.

A distinguished Yale professor, for whom I have profound regard, leaving the safe fields of archaeological study, and venturing into the complex relations of international politics, calls the Monroe Doctrine an "obsolete shibboleth." How in the world any one man can assume to pass that judgment upon a great policy or doctrine, I cannot possibly understand. I fear that in his academic viewpoint he has exaggerated the importance which the Latin-American countries attach to the Monroe Doctrine, and he has attributed to that much assailed and suffering Doctrine all kinds of faults which are due to entirely other and different causes, such as North American ignorance and lack of appreciation of South America.

In conclusion, the Monroe Doctrine in its final analysis, in my opinion, and, as I say, I do not for a minute state these things in a didactic way and my judgment may be entirely wrong, will continue to be a great *international* principle only to the degree that it is evolved into this greater Pan-American policy; and from a Doctrine of the United States alone into a policy of all the American republics, and now, if you follow me, though it is a little complicated, to the degree that it is evolved from being *subjective* on the part of the United States alone towards all the other American republics as *objective*, to being *subjective* on the part of each towards each and all the others as *objective*. That is, making each and every American republic feel that it is part of its policy towards each and every other American republic, instead of being just the policy of the United States alone towards all these other countries. To be still clearer in my idea I would say that I mean to evolve the Monroe Doctrine

from being *subjective* on the part of the United States towards the other American republics in an *objective* position, to being *subjective* on the part of each and all towards in turn each and all as *objective*.

Then we will have achieved, in my opinion, that ideal, unselfish, fraternal relationship of the American governments and peoples which will give a new worth and a permanent, acceptable significance to Pan-American relationship, Pan-American accord, and the status of the Pan-American Union.